

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S OPEN INNOVATION PORTAL HOSTS NEA FOUNDATION'S
*CHALLENGE TO INNOVATE (C2i)***

Today, the U.S. Department of Education and the NEA Foundation are launching a new challenge for public school educators to identify and solve education's most pressing classroom challenges.

The new *Challenge to Innovate (C2i)* will give educators across the country the opportunity to address pressing education needs. By enlisting teachers to think creatively and implement innovative classroom ideas, C2i focuses intensely on solutions to the problems teachers face in their classrooms. C2i also recognizes the urgency of improvement by providing a new model that moves rapidly from idea conception to implementation and evaluation while simultaneously providing critical support to teachers.

"Smart innovation will help dramatically accelerate achievement and attainment," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "Without it, we will surely fall short of our goals to prepare all of America's students for success in the global economy."

In the new partnership, the Education Department's [Open Innovation Portal](#) will host the *Challenge to Innovate*, a three-phase challenge from the NEA Foundation. The first phase of the challenge, from Sept. 7 through Oct. 19, asks educators to share their most pressing classroom challenges that can be solved with \$500 or less. The five ideas with the most votes, as judged by the Open Innovation Portal community, will each receive \$1000 from the NEA Foundation.

In the second phase, from Nov. 16 through Jan. 14, educators will post the best solutions to the winning challenges. Up to 10 solutions will receive a \$2,500 implementation grant from the NEA Foundation for their schools.

In the final phase of C2i, from Jan. 17 through Feb. 4, the NEA Foundation will select and post up to three solutions to receive a \$5,000 planning grant and technical support. These winning solutions will be posted on the [Donors Choose](#) website, where teachers will be invited to submit requests to receive up to \$500 in implementation costs. The NEA Foundation, in partnership with citizen philanthropists from the Donors Choose community, will provide funding for teachers to implement and test the innovative solutions.

Educators can participate by joining the Department's Open Innovation Portal community. Then, educators can select the NEA Foundation C2i challenge and post, review, comment, and vote on the most pressing classroom challenges and their solutions.

The Department of Education, the NEA Foundation and Donors Choose are using the Department's innovation portal to collect ideas from teachers as part of a new government-wide initiative to solicit solutions to our nation's challenges. [Challenge.gov](#), also unveiled today, is a new online site where entrepreneurs, innovators, and citizen solvers can compete for prestige and prizes by providing novel solutions to tough national problems, large and small.

Open Innovation Portal

In February 2010, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement launched the Open Innovation Portal as a collaborative web community where education stakeholders can highlight areas of need, propose solutions and fund, implement, and improve these solutions in and outside of the classroom. Since then, more than 5,000 members have joined the Portal, created more than 1,000 connections and posted more than 250 ideas to improve education.

To register for the NEA Foundation's *Challenge to Innovate (C2i)* go to [innovation.ed.gov](#).